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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

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[1](#)1. Mideast

I."Obama, the Fly and the Revolution"

Senior columnist Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/23): "Barack Obama's election campaign was the best show in America.... He is now in the fifth month of his presidency, and the world is anxiously waiting to see how he will solve global problems and maintain America's position as a world leader. Yet for all his White House activity, Obama has kept his sense of humor and his popular touch. He was filmed killing a pesky fly with a single blow during an interview with CNBC.... He plays handball in the Oval Office, speaks on the phone with his legs on the table, is photographed in a chef's apron cooking up a presidential barbecue, and so forth. In between all this, Obama gave a 55-minute speech to the Islamic world at the University of Cairo, of which seven minutes were devoted to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is not clear why he chose this theatrical manner and this particular venue to speak his piece. But it is even less clear what he hoped to achieve. That... the lion and the lamb would lie down together? What did he think, that the settlements are really the heart of the conflict between us and the Palestinians, and not their opposition to Israel's very existence? And while we are on the subject, why did he not mention that they refused to accept the two-thirds of this land that the United Nations allocated them on November 29, 1947, and instead sentenced both us and themselves to decades of bloodshed?...

Obama placed his vision on the table and made it clear he is waiting for an answer. But three weeks after his oratory in Cairo, the Arabs have yet to bat an eyelid, because they interpreted Obama's speech as being aimed solely at Israel. Netanyahu labored over his response like someone suffering from constipation.... In a carefully thought out speech..., he got to the heart of the problem: He is willing to recognize a Palestinian state, albeit a demilitarized one, in exchange for recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. He thereby essentially recognized the principle of two states for two peoples.... But the Palestinian response, contrarian and infuriating as always, came from Saeb Erekat: "Even in 1,000 years, we will not recognize the Jewish state." ... Thus, judged by the test of results, Obama's speech proved empty, unless, in the wake of his prose, a comprehensive American plan for ending the conflict is secretly being cooked up.... Obama is a superb performer, but he will be tested not on rhetoric, but on implementation, his ability to stop the spread of radical Islam in our region. And, on a smaller scale, his ability to force the Palestinians to accept the idea of two states for two peoples."

II. "Don't Hold Your Breath"

Moshe Arens, a former Likud member, a former Minister of Defense and Foreign Affairs, and a former Israeli Ambassador to the US, wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/23): "His [Netanyahu] speech may have brought a feeling of satisfaction to all those who have been preaching the merits of the two-state solution, but they should not hold their breath in anticipation of its implementation.... What is the significance of Netanyahu's speech? Speeches rarely change the reality on the ground, and it is the reality on the ground that will constrain progress. Hamas controls Gaza and is amassing weapons with the objective of terrorizing Israel's civilian population. And Mahmoud Abbas does not control Judea and Samaria, despite the assistance he receives from Israel, the United States and the European Union. He is not in a position to implement any agreements he might sign. Palestinian terror remains the major obstacle.... The task at hand is to suppress Palestinian terror. When that task is accomplished a number of options for a peaceful settlement in the area will begin to open up. The two-state solution will be only one of them.... There was a time before the State of Israel was established when the Jewish people had no choice but to take orders from others. That time has passed. Israel's leaders must steer a course that is in the best long-term interests of Israel. We will gladly accept advice, but not orders."

12. Iran

1. "Obama's Odd Response to Iran"

Yaakov Ahimeir, anchorman and editor of the weekly international news program "Roim Olam" on Israel Television's Channel One, wrote in the conservative, pluralist Israel Hayom(6/23): "The free world waited for the president's words, and he, even in the more assertive statements he made on Sunday about events in Iran, is still projecting silence.... True, Obama warned the Iranian government and asked it to put an end to acts of violence and the illegal steps

taken against its citizens. But his statement was only made after pressure on him from home mounted, from the political arena. This silence, incidentally, was explained by his not wanting to meddle in Iran's domestic affairs. Excuse me? Since when does the US, the superpower, refrain from meddling in the domestic affairs of foreign countries? In the past it meddled in Iran a great deal.... But in the affair of the uprising in Iran, Obama suddenly forgot his art of rhetoric that won him applause after the "Cairo speech."... His limp statements are only the natural continuation of a policy that he wishes to pursue and which he declared back during his race for the presidency: the policy of dialogue with the regime of President Ahmadinejad. But this policy is collapsing even before it began to be implemented and before any quid pro quo was received from Iran regarding its nuclear program.... To the explanation that blatant presidential meddling, even rhetoric, will "play into the hands" of the regime in Iran, it can be replied that a person who called the US the 'great Satan' cannot not resent an ideological response."

II. "The Obama Effect"

Commentator Caroline B. Glick wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (6/23): "It took US President Barack Obama eight days to issue a clear statement of support for the millions of pro-freedom demonstrators throughout Iran risking their lives to oppose the tyranny of the mullahs. He offered no American support of any kind for the protesters. Indeed, it is hard to say that in making his statement, the American president was speaking primarily as an American.... According to several prominent Western bloggers with direct ties to the protesters, Obama's statement left the Iranians underwhelmed and angry.... But as Cooper [Helen Cooper, the New York Times' diplomatic correspondent, 6/21] sees it, the protesters owe their ability to oppose the regime that just stole their votes and has trampled their basic human rights for 30 years to Obama and the so-called "Obama effect."... The real Obama effect on world affairs relates to the US media's unprecedented willingness to abandon the basic responsibilities of a free press in favor of acting as propagandists for the president. From Cooper, who pretends that Obama's unreciprocated open hand to the mullahs is what empowered the protesters, to Newsweek editor Evan Thomas, who referred to Obama earlier this month as a "sort of God," without a hint of irony, the US media have mobilized to serve the needs of the president.... The most important repercussion of the US media's propagandistic reporting is that the American public is denied the ability to understand events as they unfold.... If Times readers were permitted to know just how demented Khamenei's views of the world are, they might come to the conclusion that Obama's intense desire to sit down with him, and his constant pandering to Iran's "supreme leader," are ill-advised and counterproductive,... that it is impossible to achieve a meeting of the minds with a man who calls Americans "morons" and leads his subordinate government officials in chants of "Death to America," "Death to Britain" and "Death to Israel."... As far as his media servants are concerned, his "mere election" is responsible for everything positive that has occurred in the US and throughout the world since last November.... In free societies, the media's primary responsibilities are to report current events to the public, and place those events into an historical context to enable the public to understand how and why they occurred.... Obama and his media flacks would have us believe that by speaking of American values and by distinguishing friend from foe, former president George W. Bush raised the hackles of the world against America. Perhaps there is some truth to this assertion. Perhaps there isn't. What they fail to consider is that by genuflecting to tyrants, Obama has made the US an international laughingstock. And unlike the US media, they realize that America has no understudy."

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